

Alfred Brendel's formative recordings of Franz Liszt's First and Second Piano Concertos and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concertos Nos. 17, 22, and 25, originally made for the Vox label in the late 1950s and early 1960s, offer a fascinating glimpse into the artistry of a pianist whose career would soon reach meteoric heights. These early sessions showcase Brendel's formidable intelligence, insightful musicianship, and a clarity of thought and execution that became hallmarks of his long and distinguished career.

Brendel's recordings of the Liszt concertos, made with the incisive and sympathetic accompaniment of conductor Michael Gielen, stand as particularly significant contributions to the recorded catalogue. Liszt's First Concerto demands both technical virtuosity and interpretative insight, qualities that Brendel brings vividly to life through his cerebral yet passionate approach. He navigates the concerto's dramatic contrasts with remarkable poise, highlighting its compelling dialogue between piano and orchestra. Gielen, known for his rigorous approach and clarity of texture, ensures that orchestra and soloist interact as true equals.

Liszt's Second Piano Concerto, notable for its innovative single-movement structure divided into multiple contrasting sections, finds in Brendel an ideal advocate. Here, the pianist's lyrical sensibility emerges powerfully, highlighting the concerto's inherently poetic nature. The reflective passages, notably in the quasi-improvisatory Adagio sostenuto assai, are delivered with profound introspection and tonal warmth, while the bravura passages are dispatched with controlled energy. Under Gielen's baton, the orchestral texture is rendered with exceptional transparency, creating an ideal backdrop for Brendel's lucid pianism.

The Mozart concertos in this collection, recorded under the sensitive and supportive direction of conductor Paul Angerer, reveal Brendel's profound affinity for Mozart's delicate balance between elegance and emotional depth. The Concerto No. 17 in G major, K.453, renowned for its graceful themes and charming finale variations, is treated with particular finesse. Brendel's performance is characterized by nuanced phrasing and meticulous attention to detail, his piano tone crystalline yet expressive, perfectly attuned to Mozart's refined textures.

The Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major, K.482, one of Mozart's grandest and most emotionally expansive works, allows Brendel ample opportunity to demonstrate his interpretative depth. His rendition captures the concerto's inherent grandeur without ever sounding heavy or self-indulgent. Angerer's thoughtful conducting ensures a compelling dialogue between soloist and orchestra, maintaining both momentum and grace throughout the expansive movements.

Finally, the Concerto No. 25 in C major, K.503, a work of symphonic dimensions, benefits greatly from Brendel's structural clarity and rhythmic vitality. The pianist brings out the bold character of the opening Allegro maestoso with vibrant energy, while the lyrical Andante reveals an intimate dialogue, executed with sensitivity and subtlety. The final Allegretto radiates charm and buoyancy, making for an exhilarating conclusion to the recording.

This remastered issue brings fresh sonic clarity and richness to these landmark performances, allowing listeners to appreciate anew the early brilliance of Alfred Brendel. Capturing a crucial phase in Brendel's evolution as an interpreter, these recordings not only highlight his extraordinary gifts but also reaffirm his enduring legacy as one of the most insightful and significant pianists of the twentieth century.



PASC 746

brendel

liszt & mozart piano concertos

liszt
piano concerto no. 1
piano concerto no. 2

mozart
piano concerto no. 17
piano concerto no. 22
piano concerto no. 25

vienna symphony orchestra
vienna volksoper symphony orchestra
vienna chamber orchestra

liszt conducted by michael gielen
mozart conducted by paul angerer

studio recordings, 1956-62

Pristine
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alfred brendel

liszt and mozart piano concertos

PRISTINE
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LISZT PIANO CONCERTOS 1 & 2 - MOZART PIANO CONCERTOS 17, 22, 25
BRENDL, VIENNA ORCHESTRAS, GIELEN, ANGERER

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PRISTINE
AUDIO

disc one (71:17)

LISZT Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major, S. 124

1. 1st mvt - Allegro maestoso (5:44)
2. 2nd mvt - Quasi Allegro (4:42)
3. 3rd mvt - Allegretto vivace. Allegro animato (4:29)
4. 4th mvt - Allegro marziale animato (4:22)

LISZT Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major, S.125

5. 1. Adagio sostenuto assai (7:27)
6. 2. Allegro agitato assai - Un poco più mosso - Tempo del andante (5:43)
7. 3. Allegro moderato (3:02)
8. 4. Allegro deciso (1:12)
9. 5. Marziale un poco meno allegro - Un poco animato - Un poco meno mosso (2:32)
10. 6. Allegro animato (1:48)

Vienna Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Micheal Gielen

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 17 in G major, K.453

11. 1st mvt - Allegro (11:50)
12. 2nd mvt - Andante (10:49)
13. 3rd mvt - Allegretto (7:37)

Vienna Volksooper Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Paul Angerer

disc two (64:35)

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-flat major, K.482

1. 1st mvt - Allegro (12:44)
2. 2nd mvt - Andante (8:53)
3. 3rd mvt - Allegro (12:15)

Vienna Kammerorchester
conducted by Paul Angerer

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major, K.503

4. 1st mvt - Allegro maestoso (14:00)
5. 2nd mvt - Andante (7:45)
6. 3rd mvt - Allegretto (8:58)

Vienna Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Paul Angerer

Alfred Brendel, piano

Stereo XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Alfred Brendel

Liszt concertos recorded 20, 25-26 November 1956

Grosser Saal, Vienna Konzerthaus

Mozart Concerto No. 25 recorded 27-28 June, 1960

Grosser Saal, Vienna Konzerthaus

Mozart Concertos Nos. 17 & 22 recorded Vienna, c.1958-62(?)

Total duration: 2hr 15:52

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